Human Events *A Weekly Analysis for the American Citizen*

*Editorial Office* 1323 M STREET, WASHINGTON 5, D.C. *Telephone* NATIONAL 2066

VOL. III, NO. 21, *Issue Number* 121 MAY 22, 1946 ★ *Editors:* FELIX MORLEY & FRANK C. HANIGHEN

## SHIFTING AMERICAN ALIGNMENTS

By William Henry Chamberlin

The great interventionist-isolationist debate has reached a curious stalemate, which may well be the forerunner of shifting alignments, on the part of various individuals and groups, toward fundamental issues of American foreign policy. This debate gained in passion and intensity as World War II became first a threat, then a reality, and as America, under the guidance of the Roosevelt Administration, moved steadily toward involvement in war through "steps short of war".

The isolationist instinct among many of the American people was stubborn and resistant, as the public opinion polls and the strong opposition in Congress to the lend-lease legislation indicated. But the interventionists were strategically entrenched in the Administration and in leading organs of public opinion. It was easy to build up a sense of inevitability for America's participation in the war.

Pearl Harbor applied cloture to the discussion, because only absolute pacifists, a negligible minority in any country, could uphold the position of not striking back in the face of attack. Now that the war is over, one might expect a resumption of the debate. But events have worked out in such fashion that neither interventionists nor isolationists can claim a hundred per cent victory for their views.

The interventionists had their way in bringing America into the war and into participation in the United Nations. Yet no well-informed, intelligent and morally sensitive interventionist can feel very happy about the picture of total discord revealed by Secretary Byrnes on his return from another abortive conference of Foreign Ministers, or about the future prospects of world harmony on a basis of liberty and justice.

Many of the gloomiest apprehensions of former isolationists about the consequences of the war have been fully justified. Yet it is doubtful whether any realistic and mentally flexible isolationist would today feel as confident about the efficacy of an American

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policy based on defense of this hemisphere, in the narrow sense of the term, as he might have felt in 1939 or 1940.

If we try to analyze the weaknesses and fallacies, both in the extreme interventionist position and in the extreme isolationist position, we may be on the road to a healthy synthesis, in the shape of that unified and positive American foreign policy which Senator Vandenberg now anticipates.

II

With the exception of the horrible and maniacal attempt to exterminate the Jews of Europe on a purely racial basis, there is not a single crime attributable to the Nazis that cannot also be charged in greater or less degree to the victorious powers. Looting, rape, oppression, fixing of arbitrary and unnatural borders to an accompaniment of inhuman mass deportations, impressment for slave labor, more or less deliberately induced starvation -- all these outrageous crimes against moral and natural law have been characteristic of the "peace", as of the war.

A year after the fighting has ceased in Europe conditions continue to deteriorate. The frantic appeals of UNRRA are only partly a consequence of the devastation and depletion of stocks during the war. They arise in part from the crimes of the peace. Unless these crimes are repaired, or at least alleviated, America will find itself in the position of a man pouring water into a sieve, sending relief year after year to a Europe that is not being allowed to get on its own feet, to help itself.

If one looks back to the interventionist inspirational literature of the 1939-1941 period one finds three grave and irresponsible blunders. First, it was lightly assumed, in the face of all historical experience, that total victory of one set of belligerents would lead to a peace of justice, reason and self-restraint. Second, the fearful consequences for European culture and civilization of fighting a prolonged war on Europe's soil with modern weapons of destruction were overlooked, in spite of evidence from the 1914-1918 conflict. Finally, there was no realistic understanding of the true character and unlimited ambitions of the totalitarian Soviet Union and of the consequences, for Europe, for the world, for America, of Soviet emergence as the dominant land power in Europe and in Asia.

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III

Does growing disillusionment mean that a reversion to orthodox hemispheric isolationism, based on a strong navy and no "foreign entanglements", is feasible and desirable? I think the answer is in the negative. For two developments, one scientific, the other political, have made the isolationist intellectual position less tenable today than it was in the fateful period before Pearl Harbor.

It has never been proved that the United States could have been successfully invaded by a large foreign army under the technical conditions which prevailed during the first years of World War II. But no one can argue very convincingly that America could not be fearfully devastated, and perhaps invaded amid the general confusion and shock, by a surprise atomic onslaught.

Moreover, any semblance of Balance of Power, except what may be supplied by the United States and Great Britain, has disappeared in the Continents of Europe and Asia. There is no other serious counterpoise to the regimented might of the Soviet Union. This is partly a consequence of what cool-headed future historians will probably recognize as major American political blunders in the conduct of the war.

One of these blunders, as HUMAN EVENTS pointed out when it could still have been averted, was the insistence on "unconditional surrender", the refusal to give adequate encouragement to anti-Nazi democrats in Germany. Another was the tendency to take a narrow military view of the war, to take no precautions against the establishment of a new totalitarianism throughout Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

Anyway, the much maligned Balance of Power, which gave America more safety than is sometimes realized, has disappeared. The vast unbalance that has followed has not added to our sense of security. Hasty withdrawal from Europe and Asia today would leave huge vacuums, some of our own making, into which dynamic totalitarianism would quickly intrude. It has given ample evidence of intent to do so.

The overwhelming majority of members of the America First Committee and similar organizations were American nationalists. They were neither Communists nor extreme pacifists. Communists influenced only a small section of the American isolationist movement until

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Hitler attacked Russia in June, 1941. After that time no Communist was an isolationist. But under present conditions Stalin would be the main beneficiary of a revival of American isolationism.

IV

If many of the interventionist dreams have turned to dust and ashes, if old-line isolationism offers little real prospect of immediate security or future peace, a new pattern for American foreign policy, free from old propaganda shibboleths, is clearly in order. The first prerequisite of such a pattern is to strip away shams and illusions, to see the world as it actually is, not as certain doctrinaire dreamers, whose factual knowledge is often in sad disproportion to their good intentions, would like it to be.

We must learn to distinguish lesser from greater evils and dangers, and not to fritte away our strength and prestige in empty diplomatic forays, such as we have seen recently i the cases of Spain and Argentina. If, as seems increasingly probable, the Soviet Governme is determined to treat Europe on a "two world" basis, we must accept the implied challenge and channel all our loans and credits and the greater part of our relief into the part of Europe which is accessible to us. This, presumably, is what Secretary Byrnes means in promising a "peace offensive" in accordance with American principles.

We must sharply reverse the aimless destructive policy, if it can really be called a policy, which we have pursued in Germany. We must encourage, not repress, the industrial revival in Germany without which there will never be genuine European reconstruction and prosperity. We must give as strong, purposeful and consistent a lead for democracy and th rights of man in our area as the Russians give for Communist totalitarianism in theirs.

With a consequent, logical policy of this type we may still hope to turn ruin into re construction, pillage into peace. We may still hope to help a Europe tormented and haunte by the crimes of the war and the crimes of the peace to recover at least something of the old luster of its historic civilization. But there is no time to lose.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol III - No. 21

By Frank C. Hanighen May 22, 1946

Stalin was not forthright when he sought to excuse himself for non-cooperation in the world struggle against famine. He claimed that he might have been able to help if he had been invited to join with the western countries three months ago. The fact is (as disclosed to this column by an authoritative source) that ten weeks ago the Soviet Government did receive an offer to cooperate in solving the food problem.

Twice between March 10 and March 17 the Herbert Hoover mission made approaches to the Soviet Government in an effort to obtain the latter's collaboration; and told Soviet representatives that it was prepared to go to Moscow and work out details of such joint action. No answer was received before Mr. Hoover and his experts left the United States on March 17, nor at any time during the trip, although members of the mission were available for a response from Moscow at every stage of the journey. As a matter of fact, Mr. Hoover sat next to the Soviet Ambassador at a dinner in Rome; but the Ambassador did not mention this subject. Throughout the trip, Mr. Hoover was prepared to change his schedule and go to Moscow if an invitation should come from the Soviet Government or any of its representatives. Mr. Hoover is being assailed by the Moscow radio for "playing politics with hunger". Actually, the description fits, not the former American President, but Marshal Stalin.

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A decline in the prestige of the Democratic Party, as a result of the Labor crisis, is sharply reflected in current discussions of election prospects. If the present mood of the majority party leaders is a reliable barometer of political chances in next fall's elections, the Democrats face a horizon of black, swirling clouds. This new development was very noticeable at a social gathering, early this week, which included many important Administration officials and members of Congress. Several Democratic Senators, hitherto confident of electoral support, frankly expressed worry over the temper in their constituencies. One high official, formerly nonchalant, was silent and depressed during political conversations. A Party "rebel", accustomed to the "pariah treatment" at such parties, was a little bewildered by unwonted affection shown him by Party wheel horses. "They must be in trouble, or they wouldn't suddenly love me so much," he remarked.

For the first time, talk was heard of the possibility of difficult economic conditions with bad effects on the voting public. (Until recently it was assumed that the reconversion boom would make the Democrats unassailably popular.) "Can the Democrats keep their hold on Labor?" asked some thoughtful souls -- but they found no comforting answer. Finally, a few speculated as to whether an "under-pinning operation" might prove necessary in the White House; whether the President might have to be rather conspicuously guided by certain Party leaders who command some public confidence in their ability.

All this will sound alarming to hitherto sanguine Democrats. But cautious observers are waiting to see whether this new breeze will prevail. Such moods can prove transitory; they are common in election years. Coming weeks should tell whether they deepen or dissipate. Wise Republicans do not seem to be counting unhatched chickens.

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Making the best face of it, Mr. Byrnes turned from the fruitless Paris Peace Conference just ended toward the next Paris Conference on June 15 or, as a last despairing hope, to the UN Assembly to forge a real structure of peace. But indications of a break in the present international log jam may appear sooner and not from Paris or UN. Signs may come from Moscow, as the result of the mysterious visit there of Mr. Earl Browder, erstwhile head of the American Communists.

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If Browder, who has never recanted from his stand of "collaboration with capitalism", really sees Stalin, he will be able to present a persuasive story. He can point to trouble for the American Communists in the Labor movement. In Autos, Steel, Transport, Communications and other industries, the cry in union circles is rising, "Throw the Communists out". This, Browder can say, is the result of the new line of "fight Capitalism". He need not go into the new developments in Europe -- the resurgent conservatism in France and Holland, and resistance to Communists elsewhere. If Stalin values his fifth column in America, not to mention in other countries, he must ponder this situation seriously.

Stalin, the pragmatist, has turned in the past to "pauses", "united fronts", and other temporary expedients. He may again. Or he may decide to "bull it through". But the results of the Browder trip to Moscow will be watched closely for portents as to the course of international relations.

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The fact that American business elements are battling the conservative forces in Labor's ranks is one significant phenomenon in the present labor crisis. John L. Lewis is the outstanding conservative leader in the trade-union movement. He has opposed New Deal and collectivist ideas and measures and has been, at least recently, a strong supporter of the "free enterprise" system. He has fought the continuance of OPA controls as fiercely as does the National Association of Manufacturers. Finally, it is obvious that, once the coal strike is over, Lewis will play an important role in the expected struggle between the conservative A. F. of L. and the Leftist CIO. That is why New Dealers want Lewis defeated in the coal strike.

If American Business had a GHQ, its most obvious policy would be to try to bring pressure on coal operators for a settlement of the coal dispute, without Government interference; on terms somewhat favorable to Lewis, so that he could proceed to combat the forces of collectivism in the Labor movement. But Business has no GHQ -- the Daily Worker and PM to the contrary.

Some of the most active business elements now prefer to make their natural Labor ally the "goat" for popular resentment against Labor in general. (Other business elements which are favorable to Lewis are not sufficiently organized to do anything.) It is no secret in Washington that certain industrial and financial interests have been exerting influence on Reconversion Director John M. Snyder, who is reportedly the President's adviser in the current imbroglio. Snyder is said to be bitterly anti-Lewis and has wanted a showdown with that Labor leader, if not with all Labor. This is probably not the whole story, but it is undoubtedly an important factor. It may help to explain a mysterious remark which the President made to a friend: "I let this situation come to a head." It may also explain why the picture of the Labor crisis is one of extreme confusion, rather than of an honest conflict on clear-cut issues.

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With hostilities continuing to sputter in both Iran and China, some critical attention is focused on our policies in these two areas. While Byrnes' attitude in the UN Council has not resulted in any assured success in the Iranian question, at least the Secretary cannot be accused of appeasing Russian imperialism in that quarter. On the other hand, General Marshall's handling of the Chinese situation is by now considered one of rather definite, although unintentional, appeasement of the Chinese Communists. The contrast between the two policies has inspired some bewilderment; since China, especially Manchuria, is of far greater traditional importance than Iran.

Those who know the State Department offer an explanation. The Middle East Division of the State Department is known as being strongly against appeasement of Russian imperialism. The Far Eastern Division, for its part, has possessed a powerful element which favors the Chinese Communists as against the Nationalist Government. Developments in

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both these areas, therefore, will provide a test of the soundness of these two opposing attitudes in the State Department.

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Only the most prejudiced Anglophobe will deny a tribute to Britain for its skillful policy in the Indian situation. The British proposal for an interim government has met with favorable response from the Hindu Nationalists and a surprising lack of intransigence from the Moslems. Some credit is due to Foreign Secretary Bevin. Secretary Byrnes privately expresses the opinion that Bevin's attitude has been consistently favorable towards liberating not only India but other dependencies from British imperial rule.

Indian Nationalists on the whole approve of the British offer. They dislike the weakness of the central government structure, as proposed, but they feel that as time goes on economic and other forces will make inevitable a more centralized control. It is also believed that the British Commission acted none too soon. A serious railway strike is scheduled for late in June and the effects of the famine will ere long make themselves severely felt. Thus the British had urgent reasons for transferring the responsibility of government to the hands of Indians.

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The negative attitude of Congress towards the draft had no effect on the peace negotiations in Paris, according to Paul W. Ward in a dispatch from that capital to the Baltimore Sun. The action of Congress in limiting the draft extension to 45 days and to the 26-29 age group went unmentioned during the closing sessions of the Foreign Ministers' Conference. According to Mr. Ward, British and French officials asserted that they had never heard the subject mentioned during the Conference, as though they and others had discounted such Congressional action in advance. Some members of the American delegation, says Mr. Ward, "were frank in expressing belief that Congress's action . . . would neither better nor impair the chances of agreement being finally reached." One American delegate did say that Congress's action would have a "long-range effect on the position of the United States in world affairs, but no more so than a rejection by Congress of the British loan agreement would have". Europeans, it would seem are more interested in the resources of the U. S. Treasury than they are in the size of the U. S. Army.

In this connection, the attitude of some military circles in Washington is significant. While these military men desire a large Army and regret the attitude of Congress, they do not believe that the United States should weaken its diplomatic policy to conform with the demobilization of troops. They believe that so great is the potential strength of this nation and so readily would it rally against any intolerable aggression or flagrant acts by a foreign Power, that our bargaining position in diplomatic conferences remains considerable, regardless of the draft situation on Capitol Hill.

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One of the very few pieces of encouraging news comes from an unexpected quarter -- British industry. British economists, even before the war ended, laid down the dictum that British industry must export at least 50 per cent more than it did in 1938, if the British standard of living was to be restored to the pre-war level. The advance to this goal, it was assumed, would be slow and painful, if not impossible of attainment. But, it is now reported, the rise in British exports has been so steady and rapid that by May the volume will approximately reach 90 per cent of the 1938 figure. This is a more accelerated pace than was anticipated.

There remain big difficulties: British exports in two major fields -- coal and textiles -- have hardly moved upward; etc. But altogether the picture is on the optimistic side.

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# Notes and Quotes

The Berne radio, at the end of a week marked by the collapse of the Paris Peace Conference, offers this post-mortem: "The Allied victory picture resembles that famous statue of Winged Victory which possesses large wings, and no arms. . . . After having shown a magnificent dash and spirit during the war, the victorious Powers are now slowly engaged in losing the peace. A year after the termination of hostilities the world is still living under an armistice regime, an armistice which is perhaps more applicable to the relations which exist among the victors themselves than to the vanquished. . . . But on what basis can one build up the peace? The Treaty of Vienna which put a final stop to the Napoleonic adventure was . . . inspired by the idea of one principle only -- legitimacy. At Versailles, the negotiators placed themselves upon the strong point of the right of nationality and therein found a criterion which was valid for one and all. Today, this unity of viewpoint, which is indispensable for the establishment of a lasting peace, is completely lacking."

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The current best-selling book, which debunks the Soviet system (I Chose Freedom, by Victor Kravchenko, a former Russian official), will be followed soon by publication of another, similar volume, this time by a former American Communist. Mr. Louis Budenz is writing a book on his experiences in the American Communist Party, of which he was formerly an important functionary. Budenz last year announced his conversion to Catholicism, climaxing a period of disillusion and separation from Communism. Inasmuch as he was presumably privy to many Party secrets, his story is awaited with interest by students of Communist affairs. Experts wonder if he will reveal the identity of "Rep" -- the mysterious individual who represents the Kremlin here and who reportedly lays down the line for this country. Not since I Confess (1940), by Benjamin Gitlow, once Communist Secretary in America, has there appeared a book giving an authentic picture of "Life Within the Party".

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"Democratic foreign policy is something like a Quaker business meeting. It is important that each point of view be set forth, fully and emphatically. It is also important that the view be set forth as an argument, not as an ultimatum, and that no individual or group preempt the function of the Clerk in gathering the sense of the meeting. In matters of foreign policy the State Department has to gather the sense of the meeting. Responsible public opinion must express all its views, and must not confuse the decision by attacks on persons or by a 'Do This or Else' attitude." (The Friend)

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A somewhat exaggerated report of a resurrection apparently excited a journalist in Brazil who telephoned the city of Posadas, Argentina, on May 16 (according to the Buenos Aires radio), with the following conversational results:

"The reporter of the Diario da Noite of Rio de Janeiro speaking".

"Rio de Janeiro? The Assistant Intendant of the city, Dr. Bernardez speaking".

The reporter: "The newspapers here are publishing dispatches saying that in a private hospital of your city there is a patient whom all believe to be Adolf Hitler. Is it true?"

Bernardez: "Hitler here? It is not possible. If the former Fuehrer is in Posadas now, I am just as surely in the Pacific experimenting with the atomic bomb."

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